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JUNE 8, 2000

DOMENICI: BUSH BUDGET REFORMS SHOW LEADERSHIP

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, today voiced support for Texas Governor George W. Bush's plan to strengthen and streamline the federal budget process.

Domenici, R-N.M., released the following statement:

"Today, Governor Bush has put forward a comprehensive set of government reform proposals. These are not issues normally discussed in a Presidential campaign. The Governor, however, has shown thoughtful leadership in addressing issues that must be confronted by a Chief Executive if government is to work for the people, not the other way around.

"Most importantly, Governor Bush is proposing that we move to a two-year budget cycle. By replacing the current one-year budget process with a two year, **biennial budgeting and appropriation** process, Congress would have more time to focus on other issues important to the American people. This proposal has bipartisan support, endorsed by the current and past Presidents. Twenty-three states, including Texas, follow a similar process today.

"I have fought for this as a critical and necessary change in the way we do business in Washington. Adopting a budget and 13 appropriation bills once a year has become cumbersome, inefficient, and wasteful. Since 1993, the Congress has spent nearly 60 percent of its time on budget related matters. Year after year Congress is bogged down in procedural budget votes. This is time that could be better spent addressing pressing problems facing our citizens. Governor Bush recognizes that moving to a two-year budget and appropriation cycle would leave time for congressional oversight that has been sacrificed under the current one-year cycle.

"I honestly believe this one fundamental change would provide the American public with better government, not more government. Governor Bush has seen first hand in Texas how two year budgets can make government more efficient and effective. This change would improve the executive branch's management of government programs, strengthen the legislative review and oversight of government programs, streamline the operation of government, reduce government administrative costs, and provide greater accountability to the American public.

"The Governor has also proposed other changes to the congressional budget and appropriation process by requiring a **joint budget resolution, anti-government shutdown, sunset of government programs, and a line-item veto law**. I believe these provisions might serve as a backstop to the biennial budget and appropriations reform.

"The Governor's proposals to reform the legislative and executive budget process and to establish a system for streamlining government operations shows critical leadership. Without such leadership, these management proposals often receive low priority in the Congress. I look forward to helping enact such needed reforms in the 107th Congress with President George W. Bush."